

Member.—We also want such an officer only temporarily.

Dewan.—My chief objection to that appointment is this. Government are intending to make Municipal Councils essentially non-official bodies. I do not want to officialise these bodies by putting an official over them for criticising them and dictating to them. You can soon become adults in this matter in a much more satisfactory and acceptable manner, by holding periodical Conferences. I do not see why Municipal Presidents, mostly non-officials, should not meet in Conference once a year. Government would be glad to depute an experienced officer to be present at such Conferences and, if possible, I should myself like to be present on such occasions. You will be in your own place there. You will not feel the presence of an official over you, and the object that you want to achieve could be equally well achieved in that way. There is the question of expenditure which I mentioned, but that is only a secondary matter. I may also tell you that, although the Municipalities of Madras are older, the people there are not so well educated as you are.

In regard to the appointment of a Municipal Secretary, that is a question of detail. If any Municipal Council thinks that it should have a full-time Secretary, it can well have it, provided there is need for it and funds are available. In regard to roads, it is true Government have enunciated a policy differentiating main roads from village roads. That policy has not yet materialised. I find that there are a number of difficulties in giving practical effect to it. If you want to manage the main roads also, you must submit definite proposals. You must ask your Council to formulate a definite programme, and see what it is going to cost and how you are going to meet the expenditure.

104. Some requirements of the town of Alleppey.

Mr. M. L. Janardanan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Alleppey) began by complaining that the fire-engine kept at Alleppey was useless and that it failed to work when required. He reiterated the points urged in his last year's representation regarding the absence of shipping facilities at Alleppey and the consequent loss and trouble to which the merchants were put, and said that Government had not realised the seriousness of the situation. Year after year the direct foreign trade of Travancore so essential for her prosperity was declining and the history of ports all over the world would illustrate that, if once trade was allowed to drift, it would not be easy to restore it. By shipping at Alleppey in preference to Cochin, the merchants would save about Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 a ton in the shape of shipping charges, and the port would also derive a good income. All that was required to be done was to provide the necessary boats and one steam tug with a boat basin where the tug could be moved safely during the monsoon. The investment on these would repay the Government several times over and there would also be no objection to Government levying a reasonable cess from the merchants after affording them the necessary facilities. These matters were discussed sometime ago at a conference of merchants, called by the Principal Port Officer, and the latter had submitted a report to Government. It was high time that the Government did something in this matter.

The Member next referred to the question of opening a State Bank and to the valuable report submitted by Mr. R. Nilakanda Pillai. He said that he had made a representation to Government on this subject so far back as 1908 and had again urged the necessity of having a State Bank at the fourteenth session of the Assembly. The Indian trader suffered heavily for want of financial facilities. Apart from the capital which each trader might invest, there were only two other sources to which he could turn for help, viz., the Imperial Bank and the local hundi merchant. Only business men having large dealings were generally taken in as the *clientele* of the Bank, which also made a distinction between the European and the Indian merchant. As the Imperial Bank did not generally help Indian trade and industries, the Government should discontinue their help to that institution and open a State Bank in its place. The merchants were really grateful to Government for having taken up the subject for their anxious consideration and he requested them to speed up the proposal and give effect to it without delay.

The Member then adverted to the problem of the sanitation of Alleppey. In view of the importance of Alleppey as the chief commercial centre of the State, it was necessary that great vigilance should be exercised in the matter of its sanitation. The problem was not an easy one. The town had become overcrowded; pure drinking water could not be had owing to the low lay of the land and the presence of a number of cesspools in it which bred mosquitoes; people were subject to rheumatic fever, typhoid and a peculiar type of malaria. In the past the Government had been spending the necessary amounts for attending to the sanitary needs of the town, but now with an increased area and population the Government grant was only Rs. 1,500 as against Rs. 5,000 which they were getting for the past several years. The policy of the Government was, no doubt, sound and unexceptionable, but at the same time it was not desirable to apply any hard and fast rule. The question in relation to each Municipality should be decided on its respective merits, and, in view of the peculiar position of Alleppey as the chief sea-port town and the additional responsibilities thrown on it, and, especially of the several items of income that would legitimately accrue owing to the influx and maintenance of a large floating population and its commercial revenue which went to the State coffers as customs duty, income tax, etc., Alleppey should be treated on a different basis from other towns.

Referring to the rate of house tax, the Member said that, while Trivandrum collected only a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent tax, there was no justification for Alleppey being asked to pay the same at 3 per cent. He prayed that Government be pleased to give an annual contribution of not less than Rs. 5,000 at least for another ten years.

Coming to the roads of Alleppey, the Member said that Government had asked the Municipality to take over the town roads and maintain them on receipt of a sum equal to the average cost of maintenance for the last five years. But that amount was not a safe figure to go upon. In the first place, the roads had not been maintained by the P. W. D. quite satisfactorily. Road making and road maintenance at Alleppey were extremely difficult. Further, the P. W. D. had raised the rates under each item of work in 1907. He, therefore, prayed that the Government grant should be given to them on the basis of the average of five years ending with 1907, *i. e.*, at the revised rates sanctioned in 1907 and that the grants should be continued in full at least for a period of 20 years.

Lastly, the Member urged the necessity for the early completion of the Ambalapuzha-Haripad road. With a view to relieve congestion in the town, the opening of a small canal from the place where the Shertallai canal commenced towards the west touching Tumboli, and one canal to the east touching Madayanthodu with roads connecting these lines, and another from the centre of the Pallaturutti river right up to the beach cutting the Ambalapuzha road was necessary. These would open up large tracts of land now unfit for any purpose whatever. He also requested Government to depute a special P. W. D. Officer to work out the above schemes in consultation with the Municipality. In conclusion, he requested Government to construct one or two decent paying wards in the Alleppey Hospital and to open a women and children's section in charge of a competent Lady Doctor with a lying-in ward.

Dewan's reply.—With regard to the fire-engine referred to by you, I shall ask the Commissioner of Police why it is not working and what proposals he has to make in regard to combating fires at Alleppey more efficiently.

In regard to pay-wards and lying-in arrangements in the Alleppey Hospital, I shall make a reference to the Darbar Physician.

I do recognise that the shipping facilities at Alleppey are meagre. Government are in correspondence in regard to this matter and the boat basin, and I believe that I have received a reply from the Port Officer. You know that the development of a port means money. You know that improvements to ports are generally effected by bodies created for the purpose of drawing up a programme of improvements and financing them. These bodies are generally

known as Port Trusts. You have not yet got an institution like this—not even a Chamber of Commerce. If you can bring such an organisation into existence, it would be a good thing. You say that the pier is not as useful as it might be, and that you want a tug, a basin, etc., to make it more useful. All this means capital expenditure running to lakhs of rupees and you cannot expect the State to meet this expenditure from its ordinary revenues. We must devise some other means of raising the money and spending it on the port.

Member.—We have no other port worth the name in Travancore and hence we shall have to meet the expenditure from the general revenues of the State. Government have undertaken to contribute 2 lakhs of rupees to the Cochin Harbour, and in the same manner something may be done for this port.

Dewan.—The Cochin Harbour does not come in for discussion in this connection. You do not yet know anything about the Cochin Harbour and you cannot now assume that Cochin Harbour is going to be financed from the general revenues of the State. A policy will have to be laid down in respect of large capital expenditure, the burden of which will have to be borne by subsequent generations also. Generally, it is the Port Trust that incurs all this expenditure, and it is for you to create such an institution, as I have already indicated.

Member.—The trade of Alleppey has not sufficiently advanced. At this stage, it is the duty of the Government to come to the rescue.

Dewan.—The question is whether we are to incur expenditure on capital works to the prejudice of more urgent administrative items.

Member.—What is the amount of capital expenditure required?

Dewan.—That is what I ask you to find out by the creation of an organisation.

Member.—It is the paramount duty of the State to undertake such works.

Dewan.—There I differ. You are a body of intelligent and responsible citizens, and it is for you to create an organisation which will help the Government with advice and a definite programme in a matter like this and ask for a Government contribution, if necessary.

You also refer to the Government contribution to the Alleppey Municipality. This question will come up for consideration again when the next budget is drawn up, and the Legislative Council will have an opportunity of discussing it. I daresay that, if the Legislative Council desires to give increased grants to Municipal Councils from the State revenues, Government will try to comply with that desire. The Town of Trivandrum deserves exceptional treatment, because it is the place where His Highness the Maha Raja resides, and it is also the capital of the State. I am afraid that Government are not in a position to accord the same exceptional treatment to Alleppey and, to my mind, if there is any Municipality which has opportunities of increasing its revenue, it is yours. I would request you to try your best to augment your income. This does not necessarily mean increased taxation only, but the tapping of Municipal resources also. For instance, you can acquire lands and by opening up roads through them and laying them out, sell them as house sites and make a profit and an addition to your recurring revenue. The problem of municipal finance is, as you say, very difficult, but the problem of State finance is even more difficult in these days, and it is for you to put forward constructive suggestions.

105. Some needs of the Vaikam Municipality.

Mr. N. Krishna Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Vaikam) represented the need for satisfactory drainage arrangements for the town of Vaikam. It was only within the last 15 years that the town had become so damp, marshy and unhealthy and that was due to (1) the Valianapuzha bund across the Kari river, (2) the construction of the Ettumanur-Vaikam and the Vazhamana-Kottaram roads without making adequate provision for the free passage of flood water from the intervening portion of the town, and (3) the neglected condition of the *olugu*